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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/TIP: RYOUSEY, MFORSTROM; AF/E: JWIEGERT

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SUBJECT: G/TIP VISIT REVEALS PROGRESS, CHALLENGES IN ETHIOPIA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2314

SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) continues to take steps to curb the international trafficking of Ethiopian citizens, but is challenged by economic realities, limited law enforcement capacity, and ever-changing trafficking patterns. To combat international trafficking, the GoE passed a new labor law and has initiated training targeting legal professionals. In contrast, efforts to combat (or even recognize) internal trafficking remain extremely limited. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Meetings held during an October 12-16 visit by Rachel Yousey, of the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), provided insight into current trafficking patterns within and originating from Ethiopia, as well as GoE, non-governmental organization (NGO), and international organization efforts to curb trafficking within and out of the country.

UPDATE ON TRAFFICKING PATTERNS  
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¶3. (SBU) According to Meseret Taddese, Executive Director of Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE), and Mulu Haile, Director of the Multipurpose Community Development Project (MCDP), more girls than boys are currently trafficked within Ethiopia. Most girls are trafficked to work as domestic laborers, although girls are increasingly trafficked for sexual exploitation. Boys are usually trafficked for a specific form of manual labor, based on the skills for which their tribe is known (e.g., weaving in the SNNP region, herding among the Oromo, guarding and shop keeping among the Gurage).

¶4. (SBU) Meseret and Josiah Ogina, Head of the International Organization for Migration's Ethiopia Mission, told Yousey and PolOff that two new trafficking patterns have developed in the last one to two years: one from Amhara region to Djibouti and the Ethiopia-Djibouti border, and the other from Oromia region to Sudan. In Amhara region, traffickers recruit young women by promising to secure them high-paying jobs in Djibouti, but then transport them to tent cities that serve truckers along the Ethiopia-Djibouti border. While women are generally not forced to stay, they have no means to return home and are shamed by the great expense their families have paid on their behalf (often over 300 USD, the equivalent of a year's salary), and remain in the camps working as cooks, shopkeepers, or prostitutes.

¶5. (SBU) In Oromia region, agents recruit young Muslim women by promising them high salaried work as domestic workers in Sudan, only to force them into prostitution in brothels in Khartoum or near Sudan's oil fields. Ogina noted that many urban emigrants also use Sudan as a jumping-off point to be smuggled to Europe or North

Africa, lending credibility to agents offering to find rural migrants work in Sudan. The 3000-4000 USD fee charged to smuggle urban migrants is usually paid for by family members living abroad.

¶16. (SBU) Meseret reported that increasing numbers of children are being trafficked to Djibouti and Sudan for sexual exploitation. He also noted that boys are easily trafficked into Djibouti to serve as shop assistants or errand boys because they are not noticed by immigration officials alert only to women being trafficked into prostitution.

#### TRAFFICKERS WARY OF ANTI-TIP EFFORTS

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¶17. (SBU) Kassa Kere and Solomon Sima, also of FSCE, told Yousey and PolOff that traffickers have become more adept at eluding police and NGO efforts to curb trafficking. Child traffickers have learned to avoid the joint FSCE-Addis Ababa Police "Child Protection Unit" at the city's main bus terminal, where hundreds of children have been rescued over the past few years. They now disembark outside the city, where police and social workers are not trained to recognize trafficking patterns. Likewise, brothel owners in Addis Ababa have learned they will be targeted by NGOs and (to a lesser extent) police if they "employ" children, and so no longer have young girls living on-site, but rather rent rooms to the girls on a short-term per-client basis, so they are considered less of a liability.

#### REVISED LABOR LAW HOLDS PROMISE

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¶18. (SBU) The GoE has taken significant action to curb international  
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trafficking in the past, and toward this goal revised the labor law governing overseas work in August, 2009. Saud Mohammed, Director of Employment Service Promotion at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), praised the revision for granting MoLSA greater authority to govern employment agencies that send Ethiopians abroad.

The new law requires Ethiopian agencies or their local affiliates to maintain a shelter for abused workers in each country where they operate, increases the cash and bond deposits that agencies must provide as collateral in the event that a worker's contract is broken, enables MoLSA to more readily seize that collateral, and mandates the establishment of labor attach positions at Ethiopian diplomatic missions abroad. (Comment: Limited provision of consular services for Ethiopian workers abroad has been a weakness in GoE efforts. End comment.) Ethiopian Private Employment Agencies' Association board members Tefera Tadesse and Amha Tesfaye, on the other hand, criticized the new law for tightening restrictions on employment agencies. They told Yousey and PolOff that as the GoE made business more difficult for them, the number of Ethiopians working abroad illegally had increased.

¶19. (SBU) Saud admitted that Parliament had not provided funding for labor attaches, and that MoLSA would not likely be able to establish such positions in the near future. He also noted that while MoLSA collects information on employment agencies - including complaints from workers overseas - this information is not available to the public. IOM is currently helping MoLSA develop an electronic repository for this information, and Saud hoped this data would be made public in the future.

#### TRAINING LEGAL PROFESSIONALS AND CONSULAR OFFICERS

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¶110. (SBU) Another area of progress has been the GoE's willingness to incorporate trafficking into training for judges, prosecutors, and police. In July 2009, the Supreme Court's Justice Professionals Training Center agreed to incorporate TIP training into its curriculum, working jointly with Project Concern International, a G/TIP-funded NGO (reftel). During this visit, the Ministry of Justice's Legal Training Division professed interest in providing similar training.

¶111. (SBU) Separately, Ambassador Halima Mohamed, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs Director General for Women's Empowerment, acknowledged that despite the Ministry's instruction to its diplomatic missions to provide more comprehensive services to Ethiopian workers abroad, and TIP victims in particular, little progress had been made. Halima stated that at present, consular officers do not receive any TIP or labor rights training before entering service, and agreed that providing such training was needed to improve consular services. Yousey noted that in other countries, U.S. Missions had been able to provide such training, and Halima was receptive to this idea. (Comment: Post will work with G/TIP and MFA to further explore this possibility. End comment.)

#### EFFORTS TO CURB INTERNAL TIP STILL LACKING

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¶12. (SBU) Numerous NGOs reported receiving cooperation from regional and state governments, state-owned enterprises, and local police. For example, the SNNP regional government provides free radio time to MCDP to air anti-trafficking outreach programming, the Addis Ababa police provide full-time police officers to staff Child Protection Units alongside social workers from FSCE, and the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation provides free long-distance telephone service and the assistance of its employees across the country to FSCE. However, nearly all NGO contacts stated that the majority of police officers (aside from those detailed to CPUs) had little understanding of TIP, and that their organizations received little support from the MoJ. Others stated that judges and local administrators did not consider internal trafficking a serious problem.

¶13. (SBU) Fekadu Tsega, Addis Ababa Administration Deputy Prosecutor, and Assistant Prosecutor Hailemariam Temesgen stated that they were not aware that a case of internal trafficking in persons had ever been prosecuted in Ethiopia. In a moment of extraordinary candor, Hailemariam said it was unlikely any cases of internal trafficking would be prosecuted in the near future because many GoE officials believed trafficking victims needed employment to lift them from extreme poverty, no matter how horrific the conditions of that work. He further stated that many Ethiopians believed trafficked children were better off in prostitution than they would be starving, so long as the children were above age 15. Fekadu noted that there were a few child exploitation cases pending, but they were weak, and the prosecutor's only goal was to prevent "huge damage." In response to Yousey's questioning what trafficking

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cases might be sufficient to merit prosecution, Hailemariam stated that cases involving murder, rape, sexual abuse, and severe physical abuse would fall into that category.

#### COMMENT

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¶14. (SBU) Extreme poverty in Ethiopia and the promise of greater opportunity abroad or in urban areas draw many Ethiopians into situations of trafficking and extreme physical and emotional abuse. Traffickers are wise to GoE and NGO efforts to curb trafficking, and new trafficking patterns present challenges to even the best law enforcement efforts. While the GoE has enacted policy changes and committed resources to prevent international trafficking, more work lies ahead. Moreover, the GoE has done very little to prevent or address internal trafficking - and officials admitted that it will likely do little in the near future.

¶15. (SBU) All groups with which Yousey and PolOff spoke stated that better GoE inter-ministerial coordination was needed to curb trafficking from and within Ethiopia, namely in the form of the Inter-ministerial Trafficking Task Force, which has not met in two years. IOM and EU representatives in Addis are in the early stages of developing a strategy to move the GoE toward a more comprehensive, coordinated anti-TIP policy, and post will join those efforts and initiate its own where appropriate. Post will continue to encourage the GoE to conduct anti-TIP outreach, including the training of legal and diplomatic staff, providing technical support where possible. END COMMENT.

¶16. (U) This message has been cleared by Rachel Yousey.

MCBRIDE